



SALLY STACY MURDOCK

A Pioneer to Utah in 1847
Mother of Grandfather Joseph Stacy Murdock

The Stacy record has been traced back to the year 1580 to a home in Barking, Essex Co., England from whence the progenitors of the American family removed in colonial days.

Her ancestors took part in the Revolutionary War. It is a matter of family pride to know that Lieutenant Colonel William Stacy was presented with a gold snuff box by General George Washington for distinguished bravery and service during the War.

Sally Stacy Murdock, daughter of Nymphos Stacy of Prescott, Hampshire County, Massachusetts, was born April 22, 1788, at the town of New Salem, Franklin County, Mass. She became the second wife of Joseph Murdock of Hamilton, Madison County, New York. Her children were: Joseph Stacy, John Dean and Nymphos Coridon; also three others who died young. The gospel was taken to them by Johnathan Durham and the entire family joined the church. Soon after their baptism the spirit of gathering came upon them. They sold their farm and disposed of most of their property and started towards the headquarters of the Saints.

About three days before reaching Nauvoo they were met by men who said that Joseph Smith was in need of a few hundred dollars and that he had sent them out to borrow it from them. Father Murdock told his wife to let the men have it, but she said that she would take the money to the prophet herself. Upon arriving at Nauvoo they found that no such messages had been sent. They did, however, give all their money to the prophet but he returned it, telling them to take care of it as they could do so as well as he.

The father had been an invalid for a number of years and it was necessary for him to ride practically all of the time on a bed made up in the back of the wagon. After arriving in Nauvoo his condition became more serious. He felt certain that if the Prophet of God would give him a blessing he would be healed. Joseph Smith did bless him and told him if he would be baptised seven times in the Mississippi River he would be made well. He was baptised accordingly and was healed.

His death occurred at Nauvoo several years later and his grave is there. Previous to this time he exacted a promise from his wife, Sally Murdock, that if it were impossible for him to go on she would remain with the Saints and bring their boy, Nymphos, up among them, he being very young and the only one who was not married at that time. After her husband's death she received many letters from her people in the east pleading with her to return with her boy. They also made tempting offers of money and land if she would come and live with them, and they would also be free from persecution. Their offers appealed to her so she decided to go and started down the river on the boat. That night her husband appeared to her and asked, "Sally, where are you going?" It had the desired effect. She left the boat and returned immediately to her home in Nauvoo.

While living in Nauvoo, she was a personal friend of the Prophet and his brother, Hyrum, from whom she received a patriarchal blessing.

The family was driven with the other members of the church out of Nauvoo. They crossed the plains with a company of the Saints which was in charge of Ira Eldredge and reached Utah, September 22, 1847.

Sally Murdock traveled with her youngest son, now fourteen years of age. He drove a yoke of cattle, one of which was a cow. These pulled a covered wagon into which was packed their provisions and most of their earthly belongings. She rode in a one horse light wagon and drove the horse all the way across the plains. Her seat consisted of a rawhide bottom chair. In her wagon she carried, among other things, her precious spinning wheel, also a brass kettle which was used over many a campfire, as well as later for making soap, dyeing cloth, washing wool, and for everything for which a good brass kettle could be used at that time. Now it holds a place of honor at the Pioneer Memorial Museum along with her little stove which helped to warm the schoolroom where Sister Mary Jane Dilworth taught school. Underneath the wagon she led three sheep and was fortunate in getting them safely into the valley. Needless to say, they were some of the first sheep to arrive. She also brought flaxseed and was one of the first to raise flax and make linen thread.

The Ira Eldredge Company reached Salt Lake Valley September 22, 1847. Sally Murdock and her son built a two-story home on the ground where the New House Hotel now stands where she lived until the time of her death. They also had a farm adjoining the Southeast corner of Liberty Park. They lived in the Seventh Ward of the old Salt Lake Stake. Sally Murdock was a thrifty, energetic and courageous woman, generous and kind to those less fortunate than herself; sympathetic and helpful in times of sickness and death among the people, spending many hours and days if necessary with those who needed her. She taught many women to spin and weave and she absolutely insisted that her daughters-in-law learn to use the spinning wheel and loom, but none were able to spin faster nor weave better than she. Many times she took the wool from the backs of the sheep, washed, carded, spun, dyed and wove it into cloth and made clothes for herself and others. They lost their crops when the crickets came; lived on roots, and also vacated their home on the arrival of Johnston's army.

She had large blue eyes, rather a pale face, and always wore a white cap with a frill which often stood up as she hurried about her tasks. She adopted a daughter who married Christen Larsen of Manti.

She died September 25, 1864 at Salt Lake City. A faithful Latter Day Saint having been a member of the church 28 years and mourned by many friends and relatives.

— Oscar & Ida M Kirkham
Book